

Remarks/Arguments

A. Request for Reconsideration

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by Examiner in the outstanding Office Action, but remain of the position that patentable subject matter is present. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of Examiner's position based on amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

B. Claim Status and Comments

Claims 15-19 are pending. Claims 15 and 19 have been amended. Details of the amendments will be discussed in more detail below.

C. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner made the following three rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b): (1) Claims 15-18 had been rejected as being anticipated by Nelsen, *et al.* (GB 2,301,548); (2) Claims 15-19 had been rejected as being anticipated by Hetmann, *et al.* (U.S. Patent 3,635,303); and (3) Claims 15-19 had been rejected as being anticipated by Kato (U.S. Patent 5,651,588).

Claims 15 and 19 have been amended herein to further define the structure of the claimed invention. As amended, the claimed invention is patentable over Nelson, Hetmann, and Kato.

Unlike the claimed invention, the prior art references do not disclose an undercut that has a rounded groove on a head portion of the nut, which head portion has a larger diameter than a shank of the nut. The circumferential groove (52 or A1 on markup) of

Nelson is not rounded, the groove is squared with sharp adjacent angles. Also, the groove of Nelson is not on the larger diameter head portion of a nut. The groove of Nelson is on the smaller diameter cylindrical extension (50 or A3 on the markup), not on the head of the nut (46). Similar to Nelson, the groove (58) of Hetmann is not rounded. Rather, the groove of Hetmann is also squared. Also, the groove of Hetmann is not on the larger diameter head portion of the nut (57), it is in the smaller diameter portion of the nut. Finally, like Nelson and Hetmann, Kato does not disclose a rounded groove. The groove (A1 on the markup) shows an indentation on the lock nut (26) that is squared as well. Further the groove is not on the head portion of the lock nut, away from the flange. (see, Fig. 1, the head being the region of the nut that is partially shaded). In Kato, the head portion of the lock nut is not directed away from the flange, but instead is closer to the flange than the smaller diameter portion of the lock nut. Thus, none of the prior art references disclose the claimed invention.

Additionally, unlike the claimed invention, the prior art references do not disclose a shank that has two tiers, with one of the tiers, which is farther away than the other of the tiers from the undercut, being narrower in diameter. The cylindrical extension (50 or A3 on the markup) of Nelson is not tiered. Rather, the cylindrical extension, with the exception of the cylindrical groove, has a uniform diameter. Finally, similar to Nelson, Kato does not disclose a tiered shank. The area to the right of the groove (A1 on the markup) is uniform in diameter. (see, Kato Fig. 1).


Thus, the claimed invention is distinguishable from and patentable over Nelson, Hetmann, and Kato.

D. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Should any extensions of time or fees be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit Account Number 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,
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